

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 ACDA-12 CIAE-00  
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05  
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 TRSE-00 /111 W  
-----032428 151032Z /13

R 150942Z APR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0505  
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
AMEMBASSY DACCA  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY KABUL  
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USLO PEKING  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MOSCOW 07811

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: UR, AF, PAK, IN  
SUBJECT: SOVIET PERSPECTIVE OF "NORMALIZATION"  
TREND IN SOUTH ASIA.

REF: (A) MOSCOW 6302, (B) ISLAMABAD 2382

SUMMARY: SOVIETS HAVE MORE REASON TO BE CONCERNED THAN  
PLEASED WITH THE NORMALIZATION TRENDS UNDERWAY IN SOUTH  
ASIA, INCLUDING IN THE AREA OF PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS. UNDER  
PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, IT SEEMS FROM HERE THAT MOSCOW, IF  
IT SHOULD COVERTLY OR OVERTLY OPPOSE THESE TRENDS, WOULD  
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FACE RISKS THAT OUTWEIGH POSSIBLE BENEFITS.  
FURTHER, MOSCOW KNOWS THAT BORDER AND OTHER DISPUTES IN  
THE REGION WILL NOT GO AWAY SOON AND COULD FLARE UP AGAIN,  
AND THAT UNPREDICTABLE INTERNAL POLITICAL CHANGES IN SOUTH  
ASIAN COUNTRIES MAY PRODUCE MORE FRUITFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR  
FUTURE SOVIET MANEUVERINGS. FOR THESE REASONS WE THINK  
ACTIVE SOVIET COVERT EFFORTS TO UNDERMINE PAK-AFGHAN

RAPPROCHMENT ARE UNLIKELY. PAST SOVIET ACTIONS INDICATE, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH COVERT MOVES SHOULD NOT BE RULED OUT ALTOGETHER. END SUMMARY.

1. KABUL'S EXCELLENT 2379 HAS RAISED QUESTIONS THAT DEAL WITH MOSCOW'S PERSPECTIVE OF EMERGING "NORMALIZATION" TRENDS IN SOUTH ASIA IN GENERAL AS WELL AS IN PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS SPECIFICALLY. THIS MESSAGE WILL FOCUS PRIMARILY ON THE LATTER ISSUE, WHILE BRIEFLY REVIEWING THE LARGER SOUTH ASIA BACKGROUND WHICH SOVIET POLICY MAKERS MUST CONSIDER IN FORMULATING POLICY TOWARD THE DEVELOPING PAK-AFGHAN RAPPROCHMENT.

2. THE SOVIETS HAVE MORE REASON TO BE WORRIED THAN PLEASED ABOUT THE WARMING TREND IN PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS. AN AFGHAN SHELIVING OF THE PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUE WOULD DEFUSE AN ISSUE FROM WHICH MOSCOW HAS BENEFITTED IN THE PAST. IMPROVED PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS COULD SOMEWHAT LESSEN THE DEGREE OF AFGHANISTAN'S ORIENTATION TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION PERHAPS LEAVING KABUL RELATIVELY MORE RESPONSIVE IN THE LONGER RUN TO PAKISTANI, IRANIAN, WESTERN (INCLUDING U.S.), AND POSSIBLY EVEN CHINESE INFLUENCE. BETTER AFGHAN-PAK RELATIONS COULD ALSO ENHANCE LONG-RUN PROSPECTS FOR AFGHAN COOPERATION IN THE IRANIAN PROPOSED SOUTH ASIAN COMMON MARKET PROPOSAL. (NOTE: A PAK DIPLOMAT HERE STATES THAT ALTHOUGH PROSPECTS FOR REALIZATION OF A SOUTH ASIAN COMMON MARKET ARE CURRENTLY POOR, THIS COULD CHANGE IF IRAN AND

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OTHER COUNTRIES RATHER THAN INDIA ARE VIEWED AS THE CHIEF SPONSORS. END NOTE) ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LEDGER, THERE COULD BE SOME POSITIVE FALLOUT FOR MOSCOW FROM DEFUSING OF THE PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUE AND THE GENERAL "NORMALIZATION" TREND IN SOUTH ASIA. THIS WOULD INCLUDE:

-- A LOWER LEVEL OF TENSION AND POTENTIAL CONFLICT NEAR SOVIET BORDERS;

-- REDUCED INCENTIVES FOR SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES TO SEEK THE POLITICAL/MILITARY INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER OUTSIDE POWERS, PARTICULARLY THE U.S. OR CHINA. THIS WAS A PRIMARY SOVIET GOAL AT TASHKENT. A NEUTRAL AND NON-ALIGNED SOUTH ASIA, IN WHICH A DETERMINEDLY NON-ALIGNED INDIA FRIENDLY TO THE SOVIET UNION IS THE DOMINANT POWER, IS NOT AN ALTOGETHER UNATTRACTIVE PROSPECT FOR MOSCOW, PARTICULARLY PARTICULARLY IF INDIA'S RELATIVE STRENGTH IN THE REGION SHOULD GROW, ACCOMPANIED BY INCREASING INDIA'S SENSITIVITY ABOUT OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE IN ITS "SPHERE OF INFLUENCE".

-- RISING PROSPECTS FOR LONG-SOUGHT SOVIET LAND ACCESS TO THE INDIAN OCEAN AND INDIA THROUGH AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT THESE LATTER THREE FACTORS PRESENT VALID GROUNDS FOR MOSCOW NOT TO BE ENTIRELY NEGATIVE

ABOUT THE DEVELOPING PAK-AFGHAN RAPPROCHEMENT. THE FOLLOW-  
ING FACTORS HAVE PROBABLY ALSO BEEN WEIGHED BY SOVIET  
POLICY MAKERS IN THEIR DECISION TO REGISTER "OFFICIAL"  
SOVIET SUPPORT FOR THE "NORMALIZATION" TRENDS IN SOUTH ASIA  
(REITERATED MOST RECENTLY IN PRIVATE BY SOVIET MFA DEPUTY  
CHIEF SOUTH ASIA DEPT. AND REPORTED REF A):

-- THE COUNTRIES OF SOUTH ASIA SUPPORT AND ACTIVELY PARTI-  
CIPATE IN THIS TREND. IN TERMS OF THE PAK-AFGHAN RAPPROCHE  
MENT, KABUL'S ENTHUSIASM FOR BETTER RELATIONS INCREASED

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R 150942Z APR 78

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WITH BHUTTO'S FALL, WALI KHAN'S RELEAST FROM JAIL AND HIS  
CURRENT PROMINENCE ON THE PAKISTAN POLITICAL SCENE. DAOUD  
SEEMED TO BE EXPRESSING HIS PERSONAL SUPPORT FOR PAK-AFGHAN  
RAPPROCHEMENT IN HIS TRIP TO PAKISTAN AND IN HIS LAHORE  
SPEECH (REF B). BY OPPOSING PAK-AFGHAN RAPPROCHEMENT,  
DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, THE SOVIETS WOULD BE PLACED IN THE  
POSITION OF DIRECTLY OPPOSING DAOUD'S POLICIES;

-- GIVEN DAOUD'S STRONG PERSONAL POSITION IN AFGHANISTAN, AND THE RELATIVE WEAKNESS OF HIS OPPOSITION (INCLUDING THE FACTIONALIZED PRO-SOVIET KHALQ COMMUNIST PARTY), THE SOVIETS WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE LITTLE LEVERAGE IF THEY  
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SHOULD DECIDE TO FOMENT OPPOSITION TO DAOUD'S PRESENT COURSE;

-- BY OPPOSING OR EVEN REMAINING SILENT ON PAK-AFGHAN RAPPROCHEMENT, MOSCOW COULD EXCITE ALWAYS PRESENT SUSPICIONS ABOUT SOVIET MOTIVES ENTERTAINED NOT ONLY IN AFGHANISTAN BUT IN SOUTH ASIA GENERALLY. THE DESAI GOVERNMENT MOVES TO EMPHASIZE BILATERALISM IN INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS AND TO BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND CHINA HAVE ENHANCED THE DELICATE NATURE OF INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS. SOVIET MOVES THAT COULD BE READ AS ATTEMPTS TO WORK AGAINST INDIA'S "NORMALIZATION" POLICIES IN SOUTH ASIA WOULD NOT BE WELL RECEIVED IN DELHI, WHICH MOSCOW LOOKS ON AS A MOST IMPORTANT THIRD WORLD "FRIEND" IN WHICH IT HAS INVESTED CONSIDERABLE RESOURCES. A FAILURE TO ENDORSE - OR MOVES TO FRUSTRATE - PAK-AFGHAN RAPPROCHEMENT WOULD ALSO HAVE A NEGATIVE FALLOUT IN TEHRAN, WITH WHICH THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN PURSUING BETTER RELATIONS.

4. IN OUR VIEW, MOSCOW WOULD ALSO BE TAKING GREAT RISKS IN ATTEMPTING ACTIVELY TO STOKE RESISTANCE TO THE PAK-AFGHAN RAPPROCHEMENT THROUGH SOVIET COVERT CHANNELS (WHICH ARE CERTAINLY IN PLACE IN AFGHANISTAN). MOSCOW OFTEN PURSUES ITS ENDS THROUGH "LAYERED DIPLOMACY" IN WHICH ITS WELL-LUBRICATED AND STAFFED COVERT SERVICES ABROAD FOLLOW POLICIES DIFFERING FROM PUBLICLY OR PRIVATELY STATED SOVIET POSITIONS. PAST EXPERIENCE INDICATES THAT, DESPITE THE RISKS, COVERT ACTIONS BY THE SOVIETS CAN NEVER BE COMPLETELY RULED OUT. HOWEVER, TAKEN TOGETHER, THE DEEP AFGHAN SUSPICION OF AND ANTIPATHY TOWARD FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN AFGHAN POLITICS, THE VULNERABILITY OF THE SOVIET UNION TO SUCH SUSPICIONS, DAOUD'S STRONG PERSONAL POSITION, AND HIS OPPOSITION'S RELATIVE WEAKNESS INDICATE THAT ANY COVERT  
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MEDDLING IN AFGHAN POLITICS COULD PRODUCE SERIOUS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE RESULTS. (THE SOVIETS WOULD ALSO WANT TO AVOID ANY ACTIONS THAT MIGHT PROVOKE THE AFGHANS TO PERMIT A LARGER CHINESE PRESENCE IN AFGHANISTAN.) MOSCOW'S INCLINATION TO ACT "INFORMALLY" OR CLANDESTINELY AGAINST PAK-AFGHAN

RAPPROCHEMENT WOULD INCREASE IF DAOUD PERSONALLY SHOULD CHANGE KABUL'S PRESENT COURSE, IF HE SHOULD SUDDENLY PASS FROM THE SCENE, OR IF A VERY SIGNIFICANT GROUP IN THE AFGHAN ESTABLISHMENT SHOULD SHOW SIGNS OF OPPOSING HIS POLICY.

5. THE SOVIET DILEMMA IN AFGHANISTAN IS BASICALLY THE SAME DILEMMA THAT MOSCOW FACES IN RESPECT TO THE DEVELOPING SINO-INDIAN RAPPROCHEMENT. THE SINO-INDIAN BORDER PROBLEM, LIKE THE KASHMIR AND PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUES, ACTED IN THE PAST TO INFLUENCE DELHI AND KABUL TOWARD MOSCOW, PARTICULARLY WHEN A U.S.-ALIGNED PAKISTAN OPPOSED BOTH. TODAY, HOWEVER, MOSCOW WOULD BE "SWIMMING AGAINST THE TIDE" IF IT ATTEMPTED PUBLICLY OR PRIVATELY TO DISSUADE AFGHANISTAN OR INDIA FROM DEFUSING THESE ISSUES AND MOVING TOWARD BETTER RELATIONS WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS. AS LONG AS THESE SOUTH ASIAN "NORMALIZATION" EFFORTS DO NOT TAKE AN ANTI-SOVIET COURSE, AND AS LONG AS THE COUNTRIES OF SOUTH ASIA, INCLUDING INDIA AND AFGHANISTAN, ARE ACTIVELY ENCOURAGING OR PARTICIPATING IN THE PROCESS, MOSCOW HAS LITTLE OPTION OTHER THAN TO APPLAUD IT. WE HASTEN TO ADD, HOWEVER, THAT THE SOVIETS ARE ALSO AWARE THAT EVENTS CAN CHANGE RAPIDLY AND UNPREDICTABLY IN SOUTH ASIA. OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH SOVIETS HERE INDICATE THAT MOSCOW VIEWS THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATIONS IN BOTH INDIA AND PAKISTAN AS FLUID AND THAT THE RETURN OF RELATIVELY MORE PRO-SOVIET "PROGRESSIVE" REGIMES IN BOTH COUNTRIES WOULD BE WELCOMED BY THE SOVIET UNION. FURTHER, THE SOVIETS

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R 150942Z APR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
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ARE ALSO AWARE THAT PROBLEMS SUCH AS KASHMIR, PUSH-TUNISTAN AND THE SINO-INDIAN BORDER DISPUTE WILL NOT BE NEGOTIATED AWAY OVERNIGHT, WILL RETARD THE PRESENT "NORMALIZATION" TRENDS UNDERWAY, AND COULD WELL HEAT UP AGAIN DEPENDING ON UNPREDICTABLE DOMESTIC POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA, PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN. THE SOVIETS ALSO KNOW THAT THE SOVIET UNION'S POWER, PROXIMITY AND POLITICAL-ECONOMIC TIES TO SOME OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE AREA-PARTICULARLY AFGHANISTAN-MEAN THAT SOVIET INTERESTS AND VIEWS WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT REGARDLESS OF THE OUTCOME OF THESE "NORMALIZATION" TRENDS.

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6. IN SUM, IT APPEARS FROM HERE THAT MOSCOW IS CURRENTLY IN A "WAIT AND SEE" PATTERN. THE DEGREE TO WHICH SOVIET POLICY WILL CHANGE WILL PROBABLY CHIEFLY DEPEND ON DEVELOPMENTS INDIGENOUS TO THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION. ALTHOUGH THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND TRENDS IN SOUTH ASIA ARE NOT ALTOGETHER FAVORABLE TO SOVIET INTERESTS, THERE IS AT THIS POINT PRESENTLY LITTLE ROOM FOR SOVIET MANEUVERING AGAINST THESE TRENDS EXCEPT AT RISKS TO SOVIET IMAGE. PRESTIGE AND INTERESTS IN THE REGION WHICH COULD OUTWEIGH THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS. ALTHOUGH COVERT SOVIET ACTIONS AGAINST PAK-AFGHAN RAPPROCHEMENT DO NOT SEEM CONSISTENT WITH SOVIET INTERESTS IN AREA, SUCH ACTIONS CANNOT BE RULED OUT AS POSSIBILITY, SINCE SOVIETS HAVE EXTENSIVE RECORD OF PURSUING COVERT ACTION WHICH EVENTUALLY REDOUND TO THEIR DISADVANTAGE.  
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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** PEPR, PBOR, UR, AF, PK, IN, XD  
**To:** STATE  
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